



Representative Marvin Abney, Chair

House Finance Committee

April 14, 2026

**Support for H8317 - Appropriate \$5 million to restore the 2025 RIPTA service cuts**

Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee,

Rhode Island Working Families Power writes in strong support of H8317, Representative Alzate's bill to appropriate five million dollars to the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to continue services, fill the current budget deficit, restore service cuts, and implement improvements to the public transit system. Working Families Power advocates for policies that promote economic justice and allow all people to meet their basic needs and live with dignity, and robust public transit is essential to that mission.

For tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders, RIPTA is not a convenience — it is a lifeline. Workers commuting to jobs, seniors traveling to medical appointments, students getting to school, and residents without access to a car depend on RIPTA every single day. Service cuts do not happen in a vacuum: when buses run less frequently, routes are eliminated, or schedules shrink, real people lose access to employment, healthcare, and opportunity. The communities hit hardest are those who can least afford it — low-income households, people of color, people with disabilities, and those in transit-dependent neighborhoods.

RIPTA has faced a structural budget shortfall that has forced painful tradeoffs, including service reductions that have already degraded reliability and ridership. Without emergency funding, these cuts will deepen, riders will be stranded, and the long-term viability of the system will be put at risk. A \$5 million appropriation is a targeted, meaningful investment that would stabilize RIPTA's finances, halt further service reductions, and begin the work of restoring the frequent, reliable service that riders need and deserve.

Investing in public transit is also sound economic policy. Every dollar invested in public transportation generates significant returns in reduced traffic congestion, lower carbon emissions, and expanded economic mobility. Rhode Island has set ambitious goals around climate and equity; those goals are impossible to meet if we allow our public transit system to erode. Passing H8317 sends a clear signal that the General Assembly takes those commitments seriously.

We urge the committee to advance H8317 so that it can be enacted into law and RIPTA can continue to serve the people of Rhode Island.

Thank you,

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler

Progressive Governance Director  
Rhode Island Working Families Power